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PLENARY SESSIONS

FROM PROTO-SOUTH DRAVIDIAN TO OLD TAMIL AND MALAYALAM

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0.1. The usual method how to identify the position of a language and/or the mutual relations of languages in a group of genetically related languages (in other words, in a language *family*) is to identify the isoglosses representing *innovations* developed by one or more members of the group ; at the same time, one must take into account isoglosses which represent common *retentions* of linguistic features.

In this connection, I should like to make a slight digression : when speaking about "genetic relationship" we should always be careful not to forget that "direct" linguistic descent from a common parent speech went hand in hand with the diffusion of linguistic features ; that divergence is accompanied by convergence ; that we have to take into account, in a country like India, many so-called Sprachbund (language area, areal) phenomena.

It is, e.g., more than probable that the innovation**v*—>*b*— in Kannada, Kodagu and Tulu is one of such areal features—that is features which do not represent a linear development from one so-to-say parent source, but diffusion of phenomena which sometimes crosses the boundaries of genetic relationship.

With regard to the comparison of correspondences among various languages of the South Dravidian sub-family, one should, strictly speaking, proceed according to the formula $6(6-1)/2 = 30/2 = 15$. That is, if n related languages are known, there will be $n(n-1)/2$ pairs of languages from which to form phonemic correspondence sets. Since we know at present 6 SDr languages, comparison should be made among 15 pairs of languages. That is, of course, the ideal state of affairs (suggested theoretically by H. M. Hoenigswald, 1960). Sometime in the future such operations may be carried out.

0.2. The geographic proximity or neighbourhood of the languages in question, taken as an additional, secondary factor with the isoglosses of common innovations and/or retentions, speaks naturally in favour of considering a group of languages as a genetically related sub-family.

1. Considerations of such nature led scholars, working in the field of Dravidian, to recognize the existence of a group of Dravidian speeches identifiable in terms of isoglosses of phonological, morphological and lexical features, separating this group from all other Dravidian tongues. This group of languages was termed *South Dravidian* (SDr). It comprises first and foremost the three great literary languages of the South, *Tamil* with *Malayalam* and *Kannada*, and the three smaller "uncultivated" speeches of *Toda*, *Kota* and *Kodagu*.

The isoglosses which may be quoted to prove that these six speeches form a sub-family which is closely related, are rather convincing and quite well and sharply definable.

(*a*) PDr had in radical syllables short and long vowels **i* **e* **a* **o* **u*. Sometime during the period of the SDr split, **i* and **u* when followed by *C*a* was replaced by **e* and **o*—this is the well-known SDr *umlaut* or metaphony. The exact time of this change is unknown but it must have been completed some time before the period of the earliest Tamil literary documents which may be dated roughly in the 3rd—2nd Cent. B.C. Hence we may date this most typical vocalic development of SDr approximately between the 6th—4th Cent. B.C. Example:—PDr* *iṭ*—>PSDr* *eṭ-aṯu* to stumble ; PDr **pur*—>PSDr **por-ay* layer.

(*b*) Sporadic loss of **c* in Anlaut, in the initial position, is another feature common to SDr, e.g. PDr **cātu* six : Ta. Ma. Ka. Te. *ā u*, Ko. *ār*, To. *ōḻ*, Koḍ. *āri*, Tu. *āji*, Kol. *ār* : Go. *sārung*, *hārūṅg*, Kui. *sajgi*, *saj*. Or PDr **cuppu* salt : Ta. Ma. Ka. Tu. Te. *uppu*, Ko. To. *up* : Kol. *sup*, Nk. *supp*, Pa. *cup*, Ga. /Oll./*sup*,/S/*cuppu*. Or PDr **cī* to give : Ta. Ka. *ī* : Kol. Ga. Go. Konḍa *sī*, Nk. *sī*—, Pa. *cī*-, Kui *sīva*, *jīva*, Kuvi *hīali*, *hīnai*, Kur. *cī'inā*, Malt. *ciye*. The loss is, however, not total.

(*c*) PDr **y*— disappeared in all Dr. languages with the exception of ancient Tamil. The loss was preceded by a neutralization of **ē* and **ā* after **y*- in either direction. Whereas the resulting vowel is *ē* in Central and North Dravidian, it is *ā* in SDr, cf. PDr **yāṭu* goat, sheep : Ta. *yāṭu,āṭu*, Ma. *āṭu*, Ko. *āṛ*, To. *ōḍ*, Ka. *āḍu*, Koḍ. *āḍï* : Tu. *ēḍụ*, Te. *ēḍika*, *ēṭa*, Go. *ēṭī*, Kur. *ēṛā*, Malt. *ēṛe*, Br. *hēṭ*.

(*d*) The feminine gender belongs, in SDr, to the personal ("higher" or "high") class (*uyartiṇai, mahat*) whereas in CDr and NDr it belongs to the non-personal ("lower", "low", *ahriṇai, amahat*) class of nouns. The masculine-feminine distinction in the personal class is usually considered a SDr innovation, and the CDr and NDr state of affairs of personal : non-personal binary gender division to represent the PDr situation. Cf. Ta. Ma. *ivan* this man, *ivaḷ* this woman, *itu* this thing : Kol. *im* this man, *id* this woman or thing, Kuvi *īwasi* this man, *idi* this woman or thing. Cf. further such utterance as Ta. *payyaṉ vantāṉ* the boy came : *peṇ vantāḷ* the woman came : *kōḻi vantatu* the fowl came, i.e., m : f : n division, with Ga. (011.) *sēpal vadanḍ* the boy came : *māl vada* the girl came, *kor vada* the fowl came, i.e. masculine or personal : non-masc. or non-personal.

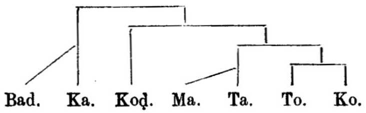
(*e*) For the 3. p. sg. masc. demonstr. and inter. pronoun we have to reconstruct (according to Krishnamurti and Emeneau) two PDr forms : e.g. **avan*/**avanṯu* that man. SDr languages have forms without the alveolar occlusive, cf. Ta. -Ma. **avan*, Ko. *avn*, Ka. *ava* (*avaṃ*, *avanu*), Koḍ. *avēⁿ* < **avan* : OTe. *vāṇḍu* < *vāṉṟu*, Te. *vā̃ḍu*, Kol. *amd*, Nk. *avnd*, Pa. *ōd*, *ōḍ*, Ga. (011.) *ōnḍ*, (S)*ōnḍ*, Koṇḍa *vāṉṟ* (*u*), Kui *aanju*, Kuvi *āasi*, Kur. *ās*, Malt. *āh* < **avanṯu*. The alveolar occlusive **ṯ* in **avanṯu* is probably a secondary innovation in PCDr and PNDr.

(*f*) Finally, there is a deep structural feature common to all SDr languages minus Kannada—viz. the formation of the past tense in terms of four morphs, *-*i*-, *-*t*-, *-*tt*- and *-*nt*-, with analogical distribution in the languages concerned (as has been pointed out and neatly described by Emeneau, 1965–66).

1.2. Within the SDr sub-family, the nature and degree of relationship naturally varies, and we have to distinguish among different sub-

groups defined by thicker or thinner bundles of isoglosses. However, the relationship among the various SDr language has remained until today to a great degree still obscure, though first important steps and attempts to establish the network were taken, mainly by Emeneau, Krishnamurti and K. M. Narayana Menon (not to mention the earlier gigantic work of L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar). The purpose of this talk is to contribute to the solution of these problems.

1.3. It is possible to set up a simple scheme in the nature of the traditional stemma symbolizing the genetic relationship among SDr languages:



This stemma was definitely improved by Emeneau by setting up a "three-dimensional model" which takes care also of other relations than the reflexion of direct genetic descent (1965–66).

Both schemes show at once that there is a very close relationship between To. and Ko., and a rather close relationship among Ta., To. and Ko. The nature of the relations between Ma. and Ta., and between Bad. and Ka., is of fundamentally different kind (with regard to the SDr parent-speech) than the nature of the relations among the other languages of the sub-family. Hence we may obviously distinguish within SDr three important sub-groups, deriving straight from PSDr, namely the "Tamil", the "Kannada", and the "Koḍagu" group.

1.4. The position of Tulu vis-à-vis SDr and CDr is so far far from clear. First, the language has been described rather inadequately. We know of a number of features which might probably be explained in terms of social and local dialect distinctions, above all in terms of the fundamental Brahmin non-Brahmin dichotomy (e.g. the *e/i* and *o/u* alternation).

Phonological and lexical isoglosses exist which connect Tu. and SDr, yet they are not very impressive : e. g. the sporadic retention of initial **ñ-* which is common to OTa., Tu. and Ma., like in OTa. *ñeri*

to break etc., Ma. *ňeriyuka* to crack, *ňeňňuka* to become soft or mellow, *ňekkuka* to press, Tu. *ňaňňu, ňakku* crushing.

However, a number of more important isoglosses connects Tu. with CDr. Thus, e.g., *ā/ *ē following initial *y- is neutralized in Tu. in direction of ē just like in CDr, cf. PSDr **yāmay* turtle : Ta. *yāmai, āmai* but Tu. *ēme* ; PSDr **yāṇṭu* year : Ta. *yāṇṭu, āṇṭu* but Tu. *ēḍu.*

The loss of initial **n*- in the 2.p.pron. is again common to Tu. and CDr. The Tu. form of this pronoun should be reconstructed as **īn*, **in* against e.g. Ta. *nī* < PSDr **nīn*, **nin*-.

Another important feature connecting Tu. and CDr. is the pl. suffix : Tu.- *ḷu/-kuḷu/-guḷu* should be reconstructed as -*(V)ḷ/—*(*n*) *kVḷ*, which is also the protoform of the pl. suffixes in Te. Pa. Kol. Ga. (011.) etc.

Hence we may conclude with Emeneau and Krishnamurti that Tu. is not a member of SDr (which is also corroborated by the past stem formation of the verb) ; it is probably a member of CDr, a rather independent member with some close relations (manifested among other features by heavy borrowing from Ma. and Ka.) to SDr, based on long and intimate geographic contact.

1.5. As far as the genetic position of Te. is concerned, it definitely seems to be a member of CDr. Cf. what Krishnamurti has to say in his TVB p. 269 : " The weight of comparative evidence discussed . . . is in favour of considering Te. as an off-shoot of the Central Dravidian branch of proto-Dravidian . . .(that) has been in intimate geographical contact with the members of South Dravidian from a very remote past. The morphological evidence puts it rather conclusively with Central Dravidian. " According to Emeneau, the structure of the past stem in Te. is very different from that of the SDr languages. The palatalization of **k*- before front vowels which is at first glance in striking correspondence with the Ta. -Ma. palatalization of **k*-, seems to be a parallel and analogical yet fully independent innovation in Te.

2.1. Toda was for a long time considered to be a language very closely related to Ka. Thanks to Emeneau who has collected extensive

and precise data on this language we are able today to see the position of To. as well as the position of Ko. within SDr, much more clearly than before. According to Emeneau, both To. and Ko. are descendents of a branch of SDr which split off from Proto-Tamil. Since however neither To. nor Ko. show the palatalization of *k- before front vowels (a diagnostic Ta. -Ma. feature—cf. Ta. *ciṟu*, Ma. *ceṟu*, *ciṟṟu* small : Ko. *kir*, To. *kïr* *id*. < SDr **kiṭ/u*), To. and Ko. must have separated from Ta. before the beginning of Ta. epigraphic and literary sources in which the palatalization is totally present; in other words, pre-To. and pre-Ko. speakers must have separated from the Proto-Tamil speakers at least several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

The evidence of the formation of the past tense stem shows that the To. Ko. system of past verbal flexion was ultimately identical with the Tamil system which is basically the SDr system minus Kannada.

The mutual comparison of the two Nilgiri languages shows a number of diversities, and it seems that Ko. is even more closely related to Tamil than To. On the other hand, there is a deeply lying identity in the phonological and grammatical structures of Ko. and To.

(*a*) In both languages, vowels in unaccented (non-initial) syllables are lost with the result of a drastic phonemic reduction and/or the origin of long consonant clusters. Cf. e.g. Ta. *vaṟal* to become dry, *vaṟal* drying up : To. *paṟt* dry, dead; fuel, dat. *paṟlk* to/for fuel; Ka. *sigi* to split (as wood) : To. *sïxb* splinter, dat. *sïxbk*, abl. *sïxbṣn*; Ta. *piṇam* corpse : Ko. *peṇm*, To. *ïṇ*; Ta. *maram* tree : To. *mēṇ*, Ko. *marm*, dat. *martk* (Ta. *marattukku*). I cannot resist in this connection from quoting the classical example cited by Hockett (ex Emeneau, Kota Texts I,p. 16): *anjrcgcgvdk* because of the fact that (someone) will cause (somewone) to terrify (someone).

(*b*) In both languages, the alveolar plosive was preserved, in To. more extensively than in Ko., cf. Ta. *maṉṟu* hall of assembly etc. : Ko. *mand̠* Toda village, To. *mod̠*; Ta. *paṟṟu* to grasp : Ko. *paṯ*- to catch, To. *paṯ*- id.

(*c*) In both languages, a sibilant past suffix occurs (which is, it seems, a common retention), cf. To. *kaṛsi* you pl. milk and you pl. milked, *iṣsi* you pl. cause to sit and you pl. caused to sit; Ko. past irrealis 1.p.sg. *vadcē* (from *vār-*, *vad-* to come). Emeneau (in Toda p. 41) has noticed that the OTa. forms of verbs ending in *-ciṉ* are possibly to be connected with these Ko. -To. past formations.

(*d*) The past tense of all other SDr languages corresponds in To. and Ko. to a stem which is the base of both past and present-future formations. Thus e.g. To. *pozzi* (formed from *pod-*, past stem of *pōr-* to come) means " you pl. come " and " you pl. came."

There are a few features which connect To. and Ko. with Ka., but, in the words of Emeneau, these are rather " trivial matters of phonological forms of lexical items." There is however one feature which connects To. -Ko. in a striking manner with Ka. -Bad., namely the reduction of the group -NC-, i.e. homorganic nasal + stop, through the loss of the nasal. Cf. Ta. *pāmpu* snake: Ko. *pāb*, To. *pōb*, *ōf*, Ka. *pāvu*, Bad. *hāvu*; or Ta. *kaṉṟu* calf: To. *koṟ*, Ka. *kaṟa*, *kaṟu*; Ta. *kāmpu* shaft: Ko. *kāv* handle, To. *kōf*, Ka. *kāvu*. It seems that this isogloss indicates borrowings, and that Badaga, as a South Western dialect of Ka., in close neighbourhood with the Nilgiri languages, might have had played the role of a " bridge " between PKa. and pre-To. Ko. in this particular respect.

A sub-group of Toda plus Kota which separated from Proto-Tamil seems to be definitely established. We may imagine a situation when the Madras plains as well as the Nilgiri mountains and the Malabar coast was inhabited by the speakers of a common speech which may be termed pre- or Proto-Tamil. At the same time, the immediately neighbouring area, to the North-West from the pre-Tamil territory, was probably inhabited by the speakers of pre-and Proto-Kannada.

2.2. As far as Koḍagu goes, there is a number of isoglosses which connect this language with Ka., or with Ka. Ko- To. and Tu.

(*a*) Ka., Koḍ. and Tu. innovate in the substitution of initial **v-* by *b-*, cf. Ta. Ma. Ko. *vēr* root: Ka. *bēr*, Koḍ. *bēri*, Tu. *bēru*. Further to the North, however, *v-* reappears: Te. *vēru*, Kol. Nk. Ga. (Oll.)

vĕr, Pa. *vār*, Koṇḍa *vēla*, Kuvi *vē'la*. The replacement of *v- by *b-* is thus a typical areal feature which has obviously hardly anything in common with close genetic relationship of the languages concerned. It is in the NDr sub-family that the change *v- > *b-* is one of the features of a closer genetic kinship among Kur., Malt. and Br.

(*b*) Ka. Koḍ. To. and Ko. have a common retention of **k*- before front vowels. But the palatalization of **k*- to *c*- in this environment is shared by Ta. Ma. as a typical innovation of these two languages only, and hence the retention is not characteristic for Ka. and Koḍ., but for SDr minus Ta. -Ma. Cf. Ka. *kī* to become pus, Koḍ. *kīy*- to become rotten, To. *kïtil* rotten, Ko. *kiv* pus, ear-wax : Ta. -Ma. *cī*.

(*c*) Koḍ. and Ka. have a common allomorphy based on the quantitative vocalic alternation and simplification of the group *ṛ + past stem suffix > *dd* in two verbs : cf. Koḍ. *būḷ*-, *budd*-, Ka. *bīl*-, *biḷd*- > *bidd*- to fall (Ta. *vīḻ*, *vīḻnt*-), and Koḍ. *ēḷ*-*ĕdd*-, Ka. *ĕḷ*-, *eḷd*- > *edd*- to rise (Ta. *eḻu*, *eḻunt*-).

(*d*) Ka. and Koḍ. replace the alveolar occlusive in the past stem by dental stop, cf. Ta. *peṟu* to obtain, beget, past st. *peṟṟ*- : Ka. *peṟ*-, p. st. *pett*-. Koḍ. *peṟ*-, p. st. *pett*- to bear a child ; Ta. *nil*, p. st. *niṉṟ*- to stand : Ka. *nil*, p. st. *nilt*-/*nind*-, Koḍ. *nill*-, p. st. *nind*-.

On the other hand, however, there exists a number of important features which connect Koḍ. with SDr minus Ka. Attention should be drawn especially to the isoglosses which connect specifically Koḍ. with Ta. -Ma.

1. First, Koḍ., just like OTa. and LT, preserved a small verbal sub-class with the canonical form CV*y* and the past-stem suffix *-t-* : LT *cey*, *ceyt*-, *ceyv*- to do, make (Modern Spoken Ta. p. st. *cenc*-) : Koḍ. *key*-,*kejj*- < **keyj*- < **keyt*-, *keyyuv*- ; LT *koy*, *koyt*-, *koyv*- : Koḍ. *koy*-, *kojj*-, *koyyuv*-to pluck ; LT *vai* < **vay*, *vait*- : Koḍ. *bayy*-, *bajj*—to abuse etc.

2. Only Koḍ. and Ta. -Ma. have a sub-class of verbs with the future morph- *pp*- and the past morph *-nt-*, cf. Ta. *naṭa*,*naṭapp*-, *naṭant*- to walk, go : Koḍ. *naḍa*-, *naḍap*-, *naḍand*-; Ta. *kala*, *kalapp*-, *kalant*- to mix etc. : Koḍ. *kala*,*kalap*,*kaland*- to knead.

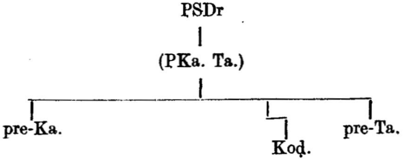
3. Koḍ. like Ta. -Ma. does not simplify the cluster "homorganic nasal plus occlusive", whereas Ka. Ta. and Ko. show the reduction of the group. Cf. e.g. Ta. *iraṇṭu,* Ma. *raṇṭu* two, Koḍ. *daṇḍī* two things : Ko. *eyḏ,* To. *èḍ,* Ka. *eraḍu* two.

4. Koḍ., unlike Ka. and in agreement with Ta. -Ma., does preserve the qualities of *e* and *o* if followed by *i/u,* c.f. Ta. Ma. Koḍ. *eli* rat : Ka. *ili* ; Ta. Ma. Koḍ. *oli* to hide : Ka. *uli*.

As we see there exist both phonological and grammatical features which connect in a quite striking manner Koḍ. with Ta. -Ma. The comparison of past stem morphs (as performed by Emeneau) also shows that the verb-system of Koḍ. (at least as far as the tense-markers go) is indeed very similar to that of Ta. and Ma. Hence we may conclude that Koḍagu

(*a*) belongs closer to SDr minus Ka. than to Ka., with the proviso that there are a few features connecting, typically, Koḍ. with Ka.

(*b*) that there exists a close relationship between Koḍ. and Ta. -Ma., and hence we should presuppose some specific historical connection between pre-Ta. and Koḍ., the nature of which is still obscure. We may therefore write *very* tentatively



2.3. At first sight, the Tamil and the Kannada groups of languages form a rather closely related sub-group of Dravidian ; and in fact, we have definitely to set up a common ancestor for the two relatively closely connected languages. On the other hand, thanks mainly to the recent efforts of Emeneau, very deep differences appear in the grammatical structures of the two languages, and, phonologically, Ta. and Ka. also show some strikingly divergent developments, so that we have to conclude that the first and the deepest split in SDr

must have occurred between pre-Ta. and pre-Ka., in spite of an existing preceding unity which forms so to say the base and backbone of all fundamental PSDr reconstructions.

2.3.1. Ka. is the only SDr language which has a massive innovation of the replacement of initial **p- > h-* systemically and thorough (although not totally[1]), e.g. **pāl* : Ka. *hāl* milk, **pāṭu* : Ka. *hāḍu* to sing, **pōl* : Ka. *hōlu* be alike.

2.3.2. Ka. **e, *o* in the radical syllables are replaced by *i̲, u̲* respectively when followed by high vowels, e.g. Ta. *eṟi* to throw : Ka. *iṟi* ; Ta. *oli* to sound : Ka. *uli*. However, these developments, though rather important, are of a more recent origin : the replacement of *p-* by *h-* begins to appear in the loth Cent., the beginnings of the other change may be traced in the pre-Old Ka. period of the 8th Cent.

2.3.3. The substantives ending in **-a-m/ *-a-n*, Obq. **-a-tt/u*, have in Ka. the Obq. in *-a-d-*, contrary to all other SDr languages, c.f. Ta. *maram, marattu*, Ko. *marm,mart-*, To. *mēṇ,mēṇt-* tree : Ka. *mara,marad-*.

2.3.4. One of the most important features of Ka. which separate this language definitely from the rest of SDr, is a deep and ancient innovation in the verbal system. It was first described and fully evaluated by M. B. Emeneau (1965–66). This innovation seems to have as its staring point the past suffix **-t-* (Ka. *-d-*) which is a direct development of PSDr **-t-*, but also replaces PSDr **-nt-*, and totally replaces PSDr **-tt-*. As the continuant of the original **-t-* it occurs e.g. in Ka. *gey-, geyd-* to make (Ta. *cey,ceyt-*) < **key-* : more frequently it is the phonological replacement of PSDr **-nt-* (in accordance with the regular simplification of the - NC - cluster in Ka.) : Ta. *aṟi,aṟint*—

1. The *p–* : *h–* distinction was preserved in the phonemic system of Ka. to distinguish between items in minimal pairs in stylistic variants, cf. *heṭṭu* to push or put into, insert : *peṭṭu* to push penis into vagina ; *hāḻu* be spoiled, ruin : *pāḻu* ruined place (as used in proverbs). It has also been preserved in some pairs etymologically unconnected, e.g. *hāl* < *pāl* milk/DED 3370/ : *pāl* > *pāl* share (DED 3371). Finally, *p–* was not replaced by *h–* in the initial cluster *p–* + C, cf. *prathitār* the celebrated one, *prajeyuṃ* and the people.

—to know : Ka. *aṟi-*, *aṟid-/aṟit-*; Ta. *cēr,cērnt*—to approach, reach : Ka. *sēr-*, *sēd-* < *sērd-*; Ta. *iru,irunt*—to sit, be etc.: Ka. *ir-,idd-* < *ird-*. Most important, however, is the total replacement of PSDr **-tt-* in Ka. by *-d-*, cf. Ta. *kaṭi,kaṭitt*—, Koḍ. *kaḍi-,kaḍic-* to bite, To. *koṟy-*, *koṟc-* to have desire to scratch, Coll. Ta. *kaṭi,kaṭicc-*: Ka. *kaḍi-*, *kaḍid-* to bite.

It seems that the deepest structural innovation in the Ka. verb-system is the replacement of PSDr past suffix **-i-* by Ka. *-id-*, and that in the very earliest sources. According to Emeneau, *-id-* is the PSDr **-i-* plus the innovating Ka. *-d-*; and this *-d-* spreads vehemently and constantly, replacing other morphs of the past. Cf.Ta. Ma. Ko. To. Koḍ. *kēḷ* to hear, past st. *kēṭ-* : Ka. *kēḷd-*, *kēḷid-*; Ta. *ēṟu* to ascend etc., p. st. *ēṟi* : Ka. past st. *ēṟid-*. Whereas the PSDr minus Ka. past stem may be described in terms of the four morphs **-i-*, **-t-*, **-nt-* and **-tt-*, the Ka. past stem is formed by the three morphs *-id-*, *-d-* and *-t-*; and this transformation of the verbal system in Ka., appearing in the earliest sources of *pūrvahaḷagannaḍa*, i.e. in the pre-Old Ka. period, separates Ka. from all other SDr languages which means that it is indeed a feature diagnostic of an old and deep split. Since it appears in the earliest Ka. epigraphic sources, and since it precedes the earliest Ta. literary data, this split must have occurred before the beginnings of old Ta. literature, i.e. before cca 250—300 B.C.

2.4. Badaga is one of those speech-forms which we are still unable to classify definitely as to their status : is it an independent language or a dialect of a greater language? Emeneau who is most probably the only scholar possessing extensive field-notes and a sound knowledge of this language, speaks of Bad. as of a Ka. dialect, and mentions the fact that To. and Ko. have some loanwords borrowed from Bad. (or are they contaminations with Bad. items?) which begin with initial *h-* < *p-*, cf. To *ōf* (in songs) < Bad. *hāvu* side by side with To. *pōb* (Ta. *pāmpu*) snake : Ko. *hāḷ,āḷ* ruin < Bad. *hāḷ*, side by side with Ko. *pāy,pā* (cf. Ta. *pāḷ*).

2.5. The next and the last mutual relationship between a pair of SDr languages which remains to be discussed is that of Tamil and Malayalam.

2.5.1. First of all, it is possible to demonstrate a number of PSDr features which were preserved by Ta. and Ma. alike, and only by these two languages, as against innovations in all other SDr tongues.

(*a*) There is e.g. the all-important retention of PDr and PSDr **ṛ* only in LT, Ma., OKa. and some dialects of spoken Ta.; in Ka., it merged later with ṉ/ḷ intervocalically (cf. Ta. *paḻa* : Ka. *paḷa* > *haḷa* old, ancient, Ta. *paḻu* to ripen : Ka. *paṇ* to be produced as ripe fruit); and with *r* before consonants (Ta. *vāḻ* to exist, live : Ka. *bāḷ* to live, *barduku id.*).

(*b*) The PSDr long alveolar occlusive was preserved in Ta.-Ma. and, in this case, in To. Ko., too, whereas in Ka. the **ṯṯ* merged with **ṭṭ*. Similarly, PDr and PSDr **nṯ* was preserved in OTa., Early OMa. and LT as *ṉṟ*, whereas in merged in Ka. with V̆] *nd* and with V̄] *ṟ*. In To and Ko. again it was preserved as *ḏ*, in Koḍ. it merged with *nd*. Examples: Ta. Ma. *paṟṟu* to grasp, etc., affection etc., Ko. *pat-*, To. *paṯ-* to catch, etc. : Ka. *pattu*, *partu* to stick to, adhere, etc., *paṭṭu* to seize, etc., Koḍ. *patt-* be stuck. Ta. *maṉṟu* hall of assembly : Ka. *mandu* hamlet of the Todas; Ta. *tāṉṟi* belleric myrobalan : Ka. *tāṟi* id., Ta. *kaṉṟu*, Ma. *kannu* < **kaṉṟu* young of cattle etc., To. *koṟ* female buffalo calf below one year, Ka. *kaṟu*, *kaṟa*, *kaṟuvu* calf, *kanda* young child, *kandu* calf etc.

(*c*) Even more important are the isoglosses indicating typical common Ta.-Ma. innovations. Above all, there are the two extremely characteristic phonological developments diagnostic ONLY for Ta. and Ma., namely

1. PS Dr $\begin{matrix}*e\\ *o\end{matrix}\Big[\ {*}Ca > \begin{matrix}i\\ u\end{matrix}$, e.g. PS Dr **eṭ-aṯu* to stumble, OKa. *eḍaṟu*, LT *iṭaṟu*; PSDr **ṛor-ay* layer, OKa. *pore*, LT *purai*.

2. The palatalization of **k-* > *c*—before front vowels when not followed by retroflex *ṭ,ṇ,ḷ,ṛ*, e.g. PSDr **kiṭu* small : Ta. *ciṟu*, Ma. *ceṟu*, *ciṟṟu* : Ka. *kiṟu*, Ko. *kir*, To. *kïṟ*, Kod. *kïṟkë*, *ceryë*.

These two isoglosses separate two large dialect areas in South India, one the Ta.-Ma. or perhaps better the *pre-literary Tamil* area, the other the Kannada area. The Ta.-Ma. palatalization occurs in

our earliest Ta. sources and hence it should be described as a pre-literary and pre-epigraphic, i.e. a *prehistoric* linguistic change.

Further isoglosses, common to Ta. and Ma. only, concern morphological features. For our chronological considerations the most important of them is perhaps the common innovation of the present tense morph *-/k/ *-inṯ-* ; this present tense marker does not occur in Old Tamil; it emerges in the shape *-/k/-k-iṉṟ-* in classical Tamil of the 5th—7th Cent. A.D. (Paripāṭal 22·35, Cilappatikāram 7·35·2, 14·125, 29·1·10). In Ma. this morph occurs in the function of habitual present, cf. Early Old Ma. *irikkinṯoṉ* he who is, *eṭukkinṯēṉ* I take.

A number of phonological and morphological features common to Ta. Ma. (e.g. the purposive suffix—*ān*, the causative suffixes *-v-* and *-pp-*) proves that at that stage of the linguistic development of Ta., which we designate as Late Old and Early Middle Tamil, Ta. and Ma. were most probably basically ONE language with pre-Malayalam as a diverging Western dialect of the spoken form of that common tongue.

2.5.2. Quite a number of innovations is characteristic *only* for Malayalam. According to the evidence gathered from inscriptions, these innovations begin to appear in the 9th and 10th centuries. Many of them are reflexions of the same tendency which we observe in the informal, spoken variety of Tamil, in the different dialects of the spoken style of Tamil. This again shows that LITERARY Tamil (even as we know it today) is in many (though *not in all*) features the most " frozen ", " conservative " style of any SDr language. In way of a representative illustration one may quote the following features :

(*a*) The development of a typical Ma. phoneme /ɯ/ and its change to /ə/ in pausal positions.[2]

(*b*) A secondary phonemic distinction arises between /ṅ/ and /n/ (between a dental and an alveolar variety of the nasal), whereas in spoken Ta. and in modern Ta., the opposition between *n* and *ṉ* is merely graphic (*if* there originally was in Ta. at all any distinction

2. Cf. such minimal pairs as /a : ṭa/ cloth : /a : ṭə goat or /iṭṭu/ put : /iṭṭə/ having put.

and opposition between the two, in *all* spoken varieties of Tamil, and in the modern literary style as spoken, too, it was fully neutralized); in Ta. there is only one dentoalveolar phoneme /ṉ/.[3]

(*c*) Replacement of *-*ay* by -*a* (*mālai* garland > *māla*, 13th cent., *puraiyiṭam* house plot > *purayiṭam*, 12th cent., *amaicc*—having provided > *amacc*—, 10th cent.).

(*d*) Assimilation of post-nasal occlusive to preceding nasal: *ṅk* > *ṅṅ tiṅṅaḷ* Monday (10th cent.), *ñc* > *ññ kaḷaññu* a weight (10th cent.), *nt* > *nn irunnu* having assembled (11th cent.) *ṉṟ* > *nn* (via *nd*) *nāṭuvāḻunna* ruling (11th cent.). The cluster *ṉṟ* in e.g. Ma. *eṉṟe* my, mine is a new, secondary Ma. development < **nṭ*, i.e. **enṭe* < **ennuṭe*.

(*e*) Palatalization of past stem morphs -*tt*- and -*nt*- following *i*,*ai*,*y* : Ta. *vaittu* : Ma. *vaccu* (10th), *veccu* placed; Ta. *amainta* : Ma. *amainca* (10th cent) provided. Cf. identical palatalization of past stem morphs in *all* forms of spoken Tamil.

(*f*) Accus. morph -*ay* replaced by -*e*; development of dative morphs -*nu*/-*nnu* < -*in*- *ukku* (cf. forms like *viḷakkinukku* for the lamp, 10th cent.); emergence of the genitive suffixes -*uṭe* < -*uṭaiya* and -*ṉṟe* < **nṭe*.

(*g*) Development of a present tense marker —*unn*- < *-*unṟ*- < *-*inṟ*- < -*k*-*inṟ*- (if, of course, not from - *unt*-).

(*h*) In its early stages, and at the pre-Ma. stage, Ma. had tense forms with personal suffixes which are identical in shape and function with those of Middle Ta., e.g. EOMa *koṭuttēn* I gave (10th cent.). Literary tradition continued to favour these forms till a late stage, but in the regional and communal dialects of the spoken language a gradually increasing tendency may be observed to drop the personal

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3. In Ta., we have thus two symbols (graphemes) for ONE phoneme /n/, a blade-alveolar nasal; only in /nt/, this nasal phoneme has a dental allophone (phonologically conditioned variant). In Ma. on the contrary, we have one symbol (grapheme) for TWO phonemes, a dental /n̆/ and a blade-alveolar /n/. Cf. such minimal pairs as Ma. /nin̆nal : l/ if one stood with long dental /n̆/ : Ma. /ninna : l/ by you with a long blade-alveolar nasal, or /en̆na : l/ but : /enna : l/ by me; further such forms as e.g. /kanni/ name of a month : /pan̆n̆i/ pig.

endings (L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar). There is absolutely no proof available to show that the typical overall Ma. absence of personal markers was a feature *inherited* by Ma. directly from the PDr or PSDr parent speech.

On the other hand, in Early Old Ta. texts, and in the Tholkaappiyam, we find verb-forms functioning as finite forms, which are however to be segmented into roots plus tense-suffixes or into roots plus verb-noun derivational suffixes. In other words, these forms used in the finite functions are structurally either verb-nouns or secondary verb-stems. They do not have overt personal endings (cf. e.g. Tholk. Coll. 200). Whether this very ancient Ta. feature is a reflection of the pre-Ta. past, or whether it is a specific Old Ta. innovation remains to be investigated on the comparative and historical planes. Also, it remains to be seen whether this OTa. tendency has anything to do with the much later and overall tendency in Ma. to drop systemically and completely the personal terminations of the verb. I would not favour this hypothesis: the old Ta. feature, it seems, is a relic, a "regressive" phenomenon, inherited from pre-Ta. stages—most probably; it is one the decline and finally disappears altogether. While the Ma. tendency is obviously a new, "progressive", vigorous trend which ultimately succeeds completely.

The isoglosses defining these and other similar features seem all to appear between the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 13th centuries. Before the 12th cent., anyhow, the speech of Kerala was almost identical with that of the neighbouring Tamil area of the same period—Early Middle and Middle Middle Tamil. After that, the Western coastal dialects of Tamil show an increasing number of innovations which entitle us to speak about Malayalam as an independent language of the Dr. family.

3.1. One of the fundamental problems scholars in the field of comparative Dravidian have to face is naturally the question of the *chronology* of disintegration of SDr. On the one hand, we have the doubtlessly established fact of a SDr linguistic sub-family with closer and looser relationships among its members—in other words, we are beginning to be able to reconstruct a SDr proto-stage. On the other hand, two, later three ancient cultivated languages appear preserved

in our earliest epigraphic literary sources, with approximately the following dates for the most ancient data : TAMIL : earliest literature cca 3rd Cent. B.C. (though some would have the date 50 B.C. at the *terminus a quo*) ; earliest epigraphy, cca 200 B.C. KANNADA : earliest literature—the 9th Cent. A.D., earliest epigraphy cca 450 A.D. MALAYALAM : earliest literature, 13th Cent., earliest epigraphy : close of the 9th Cent.

What we want to know now is an answer to the following question : what, linguistically speaking, preceded the earliest documented stage of Tamil (or rather, of formal, literary Ta.), i.e. the so-called Early Old Tamil which is the *earliest documented Dravidian literaray language ?* And what preceded, from the linguistic point of view, the hybrid language of the short cave-inscriptions in Brāhmī which is the *earliest* specimen of *inscriptional Dravidian*? In other words, are we able to reconstruct the forms of this pre-epigraphic and pre-literary Tamil and should we do so? (Only as a very marginal remark: I think it is evident that by " reconstruction " I do not in any sense mean reconstructions performed in terms of the " biological naturalism " of Schleicher, but rather reconstructions as understood e.g. by H.M. Hoenigswald, and the modern diachronic-cum-structural linguistics).

3.2. It is now more or less evident that in all the three great SDr languages we are in the possession of sources of two types : *inscriptions* and *literary texts*. Does this two-fold type of sources correspond to two types of language ? This question, so far as I know, has never been explicitly asked. On the contrary, in the majority of descriptions, the epigraphic and the literary language is mixed up and confused as if the two represented one single trend of development. And, what is even worse : The tendency to confuse *written* and *spoken, formal* and *informal* in language and style, is a mistake which is implicitly present in the majority of papers and/or books which speak about Ta. (and other Dr. languages). The old literary language is definitely not directly ancestral to the modern spoken language. In fact, the precursor or precursors of modern spoken Ta. must have existed side by side with the literary norm which we usually call Old Tamil, and with the language of the inscriptions. The spoken/written, informal/formal binarism persists in many Indian (and indeed not only

Indian) languages, and in the Ta. situation it is the rather archaic and "conservative" medium, substantially divorced from the informally spoken language of today, which is used in literary and formal education.

Starting with the theoretical conception of language as a hyper-system of various more or less differentiated subsystems (differentiated in space, horizontally as it were, as well as in style and social and communal characteristics, vertically), we may reach the conclusion that we have to distinguish in Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam (as well as in Te.), among manifold diverging streams in the lingual development starting with the earliest sources we possess, and that we have to presume this heterogeneity for the pre-literary and proto-stages as well. It is our conviction that this or analogical situation prevails in every great cultural language of the world.

The situation in Tamil seems to have been as follows: (*a*) The earliest inscriptional Tamil proper (i.e. the language first to appear with the brief epigraph of Thirunhaatharkuntam of cca 400 A.D., and more massively with the first Pallava inscriptions starting roughly from 550 A.D.). This language is in its basic features quite similar to the then contemporary literary language; almost identical with it, at least in some spheres of grammar and certain stages of evolution. And yet it shows, compared with the more "frozen", "conservative" forms of the written standard, some vacillating, inconstant and more mobile forms, indicating considerable influence of the spoken speech of that period—forms which occur later, on the one hand, in the dialects of spoken Tamil, and, on the other hand, in Malayalam (or, better, forms which *we meet* later in these data). Illustrations selected at random:

SLT Old Ta.	Epigraphic Ta. (Pallava)	Spoken Ta.	Malayalam
kai	*keyi*	*kayyi*	*kayyi* hand
ellai	*elle*	*elle*	*ella* boundary
pōy	*poyi*	*pooyi*	*pōyi* went
aintu	*añcu*	*ancu*	*añcu* five
tirintu	*tiriñcu*	*tirincu*	*tiriñcu* turned
vaitta	*vacca*	*vacca/veoca*	*vacca/vecca* placed
kal	*kallu*	*kallu*	*kallu* stone

(*b*) The earliest literary language, the norm, the standard, cultivated by grammarians and poets of roughly 200 B.C. (according to some, round 50 B.C.)—300 A.D. *In nuce*, this *is* the language which has become the base for almost all further development of standard written Tamil—until this very day (we have of course to admit some substantial deviations from this norm in later medieval literature in what we term Middle Middle and Late Middle Tamil, or in the *maNipravaalha* jargon—and yet, basically, even these styles are in their deep linguistic structure based on the norm set up by the authors of Tholkaappiyam): the phonology and morphonology of modern *literary* Tamil is in the basic outlines and structural principles identical with the norm set up in the earliest Tamil grammar probably of the 3rd—2nd Cent. B.C.! Hence the often repeated statement that Tamil is "remarkably conservative", that it has preserved its identity through ages, that it has changed only very little or not at all. This statement is quite true, very true even—as far as the *standard literary style* of the language is concerned, and can be at least partly explained by the enormous rôle which the normative approach to language plays in India and in Thamizhakam; the standardization of the literary language, the norm put down by grammarians and poets acts as a very powerful break upon linguistic evolution of that particular style. It is, hence, a rigidity and a stability not resting primarily in the system of the language as such, but, at least out of seventy or more per cent, caused by extralinguistic or metalinguistic reasons.

(*c*) There is still another linguistic current in Tamil which is approximately contemporaneous with the one just mentioned (or may be slightly earlier): this type of speech was preserved in several decades of short cave-inscriptions in Brāhmī, and in the extremely brief graffiti on the pot-sherds from Arikamedu-Virapatnam. The period covered by these texts may be set up roughly between 200 B.C.—50 A.D. This language may be characterised as a hybrid Buddhist and/or Jain jargon, used probably by bilingual speakers (whose mother-tongue may not even have been Tamil); the structure of this language may be described as pre-literary Tamil; the lexicon however is strongly hybridized (containing many Prakrit and Pali elements).

3.3. It is useful to presuppose TWO stages immediately preceding the earliest documented stage of evolution of Tamil: the *pre-*

literary Tamil stage, and the *Proto-Tamil* stage. Both stages are naturally pure prehistoric reconstructions of a language which preceded the speech of the earliest epigraphic and literary records of Tamil.

As PROTO-TAMIL, we may reconstruct—on the basis of the comparison of the earliest Tamil epigraphic and literary data with Toda, Kota and Malayalam—the total sum of linguistic features common to Tamil, Toda, Kota and Malayalam *minus*

(*a*) innovations, whose origin and development may be traced from the earliest Tamil (and Ma.) literary and inscriptional documents,

(*b*) specific To. and Ko., i.e. pre-To. Ko. innovations,

(*c*) specific To. innovations,

(*d*) specific Ko. innovations, and, naturally,

(*e*) specific Ma. innovations.

As PRE-LITERARY TAMIL, we may reconstruct, on the basis of comparing the earliest Tamil epigraphic and literary data with Malayalam, the total sum of linguistic features common to Tamil and Malayalam *minus*

(*a*) innovations, whose origin and development may be traced and documented from the earliest Ta. and Ma. inscriptional and literary sources,

(*b*) specific Ma. innovations.

To quote a few illustrations of this mothod.

1. The present tense morph *-*k*- *inṯ*—cannot be ascribed either to the Proto-Tamil or to the pre-literary Tamil stage since its very origin and spread is so-to-say historical : it may be documented from early Ta. and Ma. literary and epigraphic sources ; hence, it is not a reconstructed "prehistoric" feature or a "protofeature", and it must simply be described as a Tamil-Malayalam innovation. It can even be chronologically fixed as a Late Old Ta. to Early Middle Ta. phenomenon.

2. The loss of vowels in unaccented syllables, or the reduction of the cluster "nasal plus stop" through the loss of the nasal do not belong to the sum of Proto-Tamil features, since these developments are specific only for Toda-Kota, and shared by some western dialects of spoken Tamil.

3. The assimilation of postnasal occulusive to the preceding nasal is, again, neither a Proto-Ta. nor a pre-literary Ta. phenomenon, since it represents a specific Malayalam innovation.

4. The palatalisation of *k- preceding front vowels : now this feature *is* a typical Ta. and Ma. innovation ; hence it cannot be described as a Proto-Ta. phenomenon. But it occurs in absolutely all the earliest epigraphic and literary documents of Ta. and Ma., hence it is a "prehistoric" feature, the origin and development of which can only be reconstructed as an "informed guess". The only possible inference : it *is* a typical preliterary Tamil phenomenon.

5. As typical Proto-Tamil phenomena, we may quote e.g. the retention of the alveolar occlusives **ṯṯ*, **ṉṯ* which is common to Ta. Ma. To. Ko. and occurs only in these SDr languages. Or the past tense morphs **i*, **t*, **nt*, **tt* since they are preserved in SDr minus Kannada ; or the innovation of the loss of the nasal finally in the 2nd p. sg. pron. **nīn* you-sg. This loss cannot be characterised as PSDr (cf. Ka. *nīn-u*, Koḍ. *ni* : *nï*), but as Proto-Tamil, since it is common only to Ta. -Ma., To. and Ko.

The occurrence and development of a change like the palatalization of *k- (replacement of *k- by c-) in Ta. and Ma. proves that we have to postulate a stage which would *precede* the earliest written records of Tamil, and *follow* a reconstructed stage marked by isoglosses common to Ta. -Ma., To. and Ko. This intermediate stage between Early Old Tamil as *ad quem* and Proto-Tamil as *a quo* may be called preliterary Tamil. Schematically indicated, we have thus the following succeeding stages :

Early Old Tamil
↑
*pre-literary Tamil
|
*Proto-Tamil
|
*pre-Tamil
|
*Proto-South Dravidian
|
(Proto-Kannada-Tamil)

To illustrate at least by one or two simple reconstructions: EOTa. *cevi* ear (e.g. Puṟam 133.1, 167.7, 206.2, 237.4 etc.), pre-liter. Ta. **cevi*, PTa*. *k'evi*, pre-Ta*. *kevi*, PSDr **kevi*. (Cf. DED 1645).

Or EOTa. *niṉai* to think (cf. e.g. *Puṟam* 164.7 *niṉaii*, ib. 70.19 *niṉaikka*, ib. 280.15 *niṉaintu* etc.), pre-liter. Ta.* *ninay*, PTa. **nenay*, pre-Ta.* *neṉay*, PSDr **nen-ay* (cf. DED 3050).

3.4. Only in a very brief outline I shall deal with the last question: the chronology of disintegration of the SDr sub-family *per se.*

As far as the Ta. -Ma. sub-group is concerned, the matter is relatively clear: it has already been stated that Ma. is am independent language of the SDr sub-family, evolved out of a Western dialect of spoken Late Old and Early Middle Tamil.

Much more complicated is the situation about Kannada. The "split" into the Kannada-like and the Tamil-like groups of SDr languages must very probably be considered as the deepest and the earliest massive discontinuity phenomenon within the SDr sub-family (we have to leave apart the problem of the independent development of Koḍ., where the situation is still far from clear).

On the one hand, we have a number of isoglosses marking specific Ta., To. and Ko. innovations, and delimiting thus a contiguous Proto-Ta. area. Also, we have significant Proto-Ta. retentions as against innovations in Kannada. On the other hand we have very old and very deep innovations of structural nature in Ka. and, probably even more important, some PSDr retentions preserved in Ka. as e.g. the PSDr **k-* before front vowels. This seems to indicate that while that what is now Ka. was still probably a kind of "tribal" speech, an uncultivated non-literary language, Ta. has already attained the cultivated stage of a language with its own literary and grammatical tradition. Hence a number of the "Tamiloid" innovations in Ta. -Ma., To. and Ko., that is in Proto-Tamil, which are reflections of this progressive and speedy development, as against the retentions in a speech-form which later became Kannada. On the other hand, of course, independent development of some features must have taken place at the same time so-to-say beyond the "communication barrier", in what was so-to-say left behind the main "Tamiloid" trends of

evolution, that is in pre-Ka. and Proto-Ka.—e.g. the transformation of the system of past morphs in the verb in Ka. which is different from the common PSDr system.

All this shows that the Proto— Ka. —Ta. linguistic unity must have disintegrated before the beginning of the earliest Tamil (and Ka.) epigraphic and literary documents. The disintegration of PSDr into pre-Kannada and pre-Tamil must have occurred at least in 400—300 B.C. Incidentally, Sankalia's new dating of the South Indian megaliths to a period before 700-900 B.C allows well for the identification of the megalithic black-and-red ware iron-bearing people with the speakers of a Proto-South Dravidian language. I suspected this several years ago, cf. my paper on " Harappa and the Dravidians " in New Orient Bimonthly, Prague, 1964–65. The independent developments in PKa and PTa meant a fundamental discontinuity in the evolution of SDr, and its last stages, and the beginnings of Ta. as an independent and vigorously living, great language (Ka. at that period must have been a significant spoken dialect of the Western and North Western regions of the PSDr area, what had probably been the region between *KongkunhaaTu* and *PonnaaTu*) say between 300—200 B.C.,—are marked by conscious efforts of grammarians and poets to create a norm, a Tamil literary standard. This means the birth of Ta. classical literature and grammatical Ta. tradition of the biblos biblioon of Tamil culture—*Tholkaapiyam.*

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